

Calendar of Events

Behrend Athletic Events

Saturday
Men's Tennis
Allegheny/Mercyhurst
Westwood Racquet Club
1 p.m., 5 p.m.

Women's Basketball
Pitt-Greensburg
Junker Center
6 p.m.

Men's Basketball
Pitt-Greensburg
Junker Center
8 p.m.

Wednesday
Women's Basketball
AMCC Tournament
Junker Center
6 p.m.

Men's Basketball
AMCC Tournament
Junker Center
8 p.m.

Thursday
Men's and Women's
Swimming @ Grove City
Invitational TBA

Friday, Feb. 22
Men's and Women's
Swimming @ Grove City
Invitational TBA

Women's Basketball
AMCC Tournament
TBA

Men's Basketball
AMCC Tournament
@ Pitt-Bradford
TBA

Saturday, Feb. 23
Men's Tennis
@ Baldwin-Wallace
TBA

Men's and Women's
Swimming @ Grove City
Invitational TBA

Men's and Women's Track
and Field @ Mount Union
Invitational TBA

Men's Basketball
AMCC Tournament
@ Pitt-Bradford
TBA

Women's Basketball
AMCC Tournament
TBA

Intramurals Schedule

Friday
Intramural Swimming:
Men's, Women's, and
Coed Individual;
Men's, Women's, and
Coed Team

Friday, Feb. 22
Intramural 4 vs. 4 Volley-
ball - \$3

All entries must be at the
intramural office by 4 p.m.
on the scheduled date

It could all come down to coin toss for Lions

by Zoë Rose
staff writer

One game to go, and then the nerves skyrocket. With the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference Tournament around the corner, all teams are gearing up for the playoffs. The tides keep changing and the battle for the rankings is on, as Pitt-Bradford holds the No. 1 spot.

With Frostburg State's recent win against Penn State Altoona, the Bobcats moved to 8-3 in conference play, 13-11 on the season. Penn State Behrend jumped to 16-7 overall, 8-3 in the league after winning Wednesday's non-conference game against Medaille. Should both teams win on Saturday, a coin toss will determine who gets the No. 2 and No. 3 seed. Behrend closes out its regular season against Pitt-Greensburg at the Junker Center at 8 p.m.

The fight is on. Playoffs begin Wednesday and with the tough competition comes more hard work and dedication.

"We just go to practice, prepare and work hard and try to get better every time out," said sophomore Marty Timm.

The Blue and White took on Medaille Wednesday night, and dominated the Mavericks in a 69-39 road win. Behrend had one of its best games offensively all season, shooting 68.2 percent from the field in the second half and 63.6 percent for the game. Casey Ponsoll made a game-high 21

points on 8-of-10 shooting from the paint along with two 3-pointers. James Curren contributed vitally to the Lions' win, as well, with 18 points and eight rebounds. The Lions secured the win to keep their league title hopes alive.

Last Saturday, the Lions took on the La Roche Redhawks at home in a contest that they absolutely needed to win. The Lions did, securing a 65-53 victory.

The Lions had a definite height advantage, which played a major role in their victory over the Redhawks. La Roche's tallest player was 6-5. The Blue and White outrebounded La Roche 44 to 24. The Lions took a quick 13-0 lead before the Redhawks ended the drought with a 3-pointer. Controlling the entire first half, the Lions left the court with a 31-24 halftime lead.

David Hairston had a sensational game with 13 rebounds and a team-high 18 points that pulled the Lions into a steady lead throughout the second half. Also contributing to the win were Ponsoll with 12 points, and Steve Merrill and Curren with eight points apiece. Curren also had 11 boards.

Keeping track on the status of other top-ranked teams is one area the players are not concerned about.

"We our not really looking at one team in particular," said freshman Joe Lucas. "We are just trying to get ourselves better everyday by working hard in practice for whoever our next opponent is."

During the playoffs, the No. 2 team plays No. 7, No. 3



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON
Sophomore Dave Hairston (30) loses control of the ball with Randy Conley (44) and Casey Ponsoll (32) providing support on Saturday.

plays No. 6, and No. 4 plays No. 5. If Behrend stays in the No. 2 position, they will face Lake Erie. If the Lions

drop to third place, they will play either Altoona or La Roche, depending on Saturday's outcome.

Q & A: Who's Behind the Scenes?

Meet Brian Vallor, the man behind the furry mask

by Kate Levdansky Petrikis
assistant sports editor

Brian Vallor, the man behind the costume, is the mascot for the Penn State Behrend Lions. Vallor, originally from Pittsburgh, is majoring in electrical engineering.

Beacon: First off, how did you get the job of being the mascot?

Vallor: I was part of hall council my freshman year and [the] Perry Hall president asked me if I was interested in dressing as the Lion for SPIRIT day, the day of a basketball game, and I was like sure... so I did it. I enjoyed it. Then later in the fall semester, I was awarded work-study for spring semester my freshman year, and since I was active in sports (cross country and track at the time), I asked Mr. (Brian) Streeter if there were any work-study positions available. He made mention that he could use someone to be the mascot, and "sure," I started working in the

spring for most of the athletic events.

Beacon: Why did you want to be the mascot?

Vallor: I really never thought about it, until it happened. It was [an] interesting job. No one knew who I was, and I could have a secret identity. I was always athletic and thought it would be interesting to try.

Beacon: How long have you been doing it?

Vallor: I have had the job as the Lion since spring 2000. We had an old uniform for the semester until the athletic department ordered a new one, which was identical to the one at University Park.

Beacon: Does it take up a lot of your time? Why or why not?

Vallor: This question depends on the month, whether or not there are a lot of sports events (mainly basketball). It was really time consuming when the basketball teams made it to the AMCC/NCAA tournaments last year. Games were often, sometimes four for Behrend in a



PHOTO BY MIKE BELLO / BEHREND BEACON
Brian Vallor has to balance water polo, swimming, and the task of entertaining the crowds at sporting events.

Beacon: What events do you go to?

Vallor: I attend most all sports, but only home games. Since I am on the water polo and swimming teams, I am unable to attend the polo games and swim meets. But, as long as my busy schedule permits, I try to attend all games/events that Stacy Pondo or Mr. Streeter ask me to attend. Basketball, softball, baseball, soccer, tennis, open houses on occasions, and I think I attended the cross country meet last year when we hosted.

Beacon: What is the most favorite event you attend?

Vallor: My favorite event would definitely be something where there are a lot of people and during the playoffs, be-

cause we have a tendency to get a big crowd.

Beacon: Do you get really hot when you are in the costume?

Vallor: Do you get hot when you work out? Lift? Run? Well put them all together in one workout, and add sweatpants and a football helmet. I am all bottled up in a suit for anywhere from an hour to four [or] five hours at one time. I don't have a fan to cool me off or anything, so it is very, very hot.

Beacon: What is the best memory you have of being the mascot?

Vallor: During the AMCC/NCAA tournaments spring '01, when the basketball teams were able to pack Erie Hall, with the help of the cheerleaders - both male and female that year. It is always nice to see the campus come together for an event, and it was nice to be a part of it.

LION UNBASKED
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Swim teams overpower Altoona at home

by Kate Levdansky
Petrikis
assistant sports editor



PHOTO BY KEVIN FALLON / BEHREND BEACON

The Lions swim team had two victories against rival Penn State Altoona on Saturday. The men won 121-43 and the women won 99-64.

Tom Vignolini set two new team records in the 1- and 3-meter diving events, with scores of 180.55 and 169.35, respectively. Casey Doody also set a new team record in the 100 free with a time of 50.17.

Christine Williams set two new team records in the 500 free and 1,000 free, with times of 5:41.45 and 11:42.54, respectively. Tara Braden also set a new team record in 100 breaststroke with a time of 1:14.53.

"The meet was a both a disappointment and a great measuring tool for us," said coach Josh Heynes. "It was a disappointment because Altoona did not bring [its] entire squad for one reason or another, so that meant we pretty much had to swim ourselves.

"It was a great measuring tool because we are still breaking records, and swimming fast even at the beginning of our taper. This will help us determine more of what each individual needs to do to have a successful meet at Grove City."

The team is preparing for its next meet, the Grove City Invitational Feb. 21-23. Preparations are just like those for any big meet. The team has started its taper, or resting period, with more focus on details of the races that they will be competing in.

"The big yardage and lifting is done. The only thing to do now is wait, rest, and focus to see what happens next week at conference," said Heynes. "This team has worked hard to get where they are this year. They deserve to have the best meet of their lives! They are excited, we are ex-

Christine Williams cracks a smile in her match against Altoona on Saturday at the Junker Center. The Lions had reason to smile, as the women won 99-64 and the men's team won 121-43.

cited!
"They are liked caged animals just waiting to be released onto the rest of the teams at the Grove City Invitational. To compete well, all they have to do is just let their races happen. They have done all the work they could do," said Heynes.

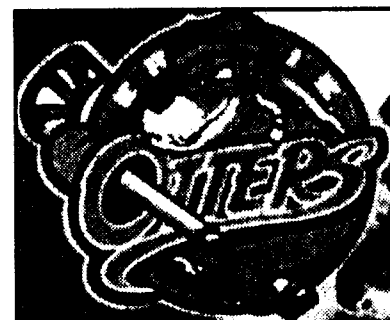
The ECAC Open Championships are scheduled for Feb. 28-29. So far, Doody and Lucas Dushac have qualified. Many others are on the way and expect to make it.

"This will be another great accomplishment for us," said Heynes. "Last year we were a no name team. Behrend? What? Who? Now this is our chance to put us on the map and display our program against the already established Division I, II, III schools of the ECAC.

"The team is really excited. We have a real good shot of being the AMCC Classic Champions for both the men and the women. [This] is a great accomplishment considering we are only a second-year team, the size of our squad, and the competition we have to face," said Heynes. "I have all the confidence in the world that my swimmers will do awesome. They just have to believe it themselves!"

Otters hockey - it's 'Otter' this world

by Mike Bello
sports editor
and
Kate Levdansky Petrikis
assistant sports editor



Imagine seeing rough and tumble hockey, the style where the players don't hold anything back. Then imagine seeing the future stars of the NHL without having to pay the extraordinary prices. Seem like a far-fetched idea?

Well, this scenario is closer than you might expect. About four miles down the road is a place where 16 to 20-year-olds battle it out on the ice, hoping to impress that one NHL scout who will draft them.

The Erie Otters play their home games at the Tullio Arena, located on the 800 block of French St. The building can get packed for concerts, basketball games, and other entertainment shows, but when the Otters are in town, the place shakes more than a 7.0 earthquake.

Many of the top players in the league have already been drafted by NHL teams. Brad Boyes, the Otters' captain, was taken by the Toronto Maple Leafs in the first round. But for now, he can be seen circling the rink downtown. Current Sabre Tim Connolly, one of the NHL's rising stars, was also a member of the Otters for a few years.

The Otters play in the Ontario Hockey League, made up of more than 20 teams filled with players all with the same ambition: to get noticed by the higher-ups. The players, therefore, play for the love of the game. For the most part, there are no multi-million dollar contracts getting in the way. They play the game because they love it, not because they get paid in Ben Franklins.

Because the players hope to someday make it to the big time, they give it their all, day in and day out. What you'll see when you attend a OHL game is fast-paced hockey, where the talent exists for

that spectacular play but the development is still under construction. Which means that if you forget the mistakes these youngsters make, you will find an exciting brand of hockey.

What you won't find is your mother's brand of hockey. The athletes, many of whom are still in high school, aren't afraid to get in each other's face. They fight, they scuffle (often), and they throw their weight around without worry of repercussions. If you like tough-man hockey, game day at the Tullio Arena is your place.

The Otters are right behind the Guelph Storm in the Midwest Division in OHL. Guelph is 30-16-7 while the Otters are 30-19-4. The Otters are right on their heels, hoping to finish strong and win the division.

Boyes and Cory Pecker lead the way in what hopes to be another successful season. Boyes has 24 goals on the season, which is third to teammates Scott Dobben (25 goals) and Pecker (38).

With only 13 games remaining in the regular season, the Otters are looking towards the playoffs. They are hoping to capture the Western Conference championship title, and then continue to be successful in the Ontario Hockey League championships.

If they win the OHL title, the Otters would then play for the Memorial Cup. And maybe, just maybe, they'll have the game of their life in front of a scout from the NHL. That's what dreams are made of.

Erie Otters Home Schedule

- Saturday, Feb. 23, 7:30
- Sunday, Feb. 24, 6 p.m.
- Friday, March 1, 7:30
- Saturday, March 2, 7:30
- Saturday, March 9, 7:30
- Friday, March 15, 7:30
- Saturday, March 16, 7:30
- Sunday, March 17, 3 p.m.

Housing
and
Food Service
**Athlete
of the Week**
PENNSTATE
Erie
Kate
Costanzo



On Monday, Costanzo scored a game-high 16 points against Grove City to break the 1,000-point mark for her career. Costanzo (Manorville/Kittanning) led the Behrend Lions in a 2-0 conference week with wins over Lake Erie and La Roche. She had 14 points in the 81-65 win over Lake Erie Feb. 6 and a game-high 22 points and 11 rebounds over La Roche on Saturday. The Behrend women face Pitt-Greensburg Saturday, at 6 p.m. in the Junker Center for their last regular season game.